

TALES OF HORROR AND SUSPENSE!



No. 2

10¢

ERIE



The CHAMBER of DEATH
The STRANGER in STUDIO X
HONEYMOON of HORROR
The THING from the SEA



WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM

WHY

DOES A SILENT, GHASTLY SHAPE
WALK THE OCEAN FLOOR TOWARD
THE NORTH AMERICAN COAST? READ
THE "SPINE CHILLING ANSWER IN...
"THE **THING** FROM THE
SEA"!

STUDIO

X

ON THE

AIR

WHO

WAS THE STRANGER
THAT VISITED A MIDNIGHT
DISC-JOCKEY PROGRAM...
AND WHAT WAS HIS WEIRD
INFLUENCE THAT CHANGED
THE LIVES OF THOSE

WHO ENCOUNTERED
"THE STRANGER
IN STUDIO X"?

READ...

"IT IS NOW
MIDNIGHT!"

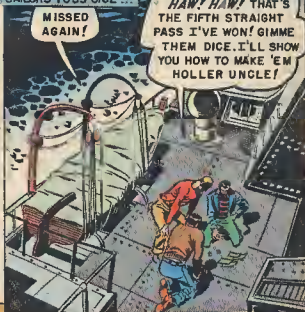
WHAT

WAS THE SINISTER
BARGAIN THAT
TURNED THE WEDDING
OF SALLY AND NEIL
RICHARDS INTO THE
NIGHTMARE AND MADNESS
OF "A HONEYMOON
OF HORROR"?

Tales of terror, spawned
in the eternal stygian blackness
of evil and death... Out of
the unknown horrors of
the night come these
stories of **SUSPENSE!**

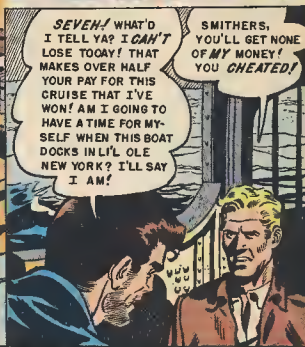
THE **THING** FROM THE **SEA!**

ON BOARD THE FREIGHT STEAMER **HAVANA**, UNDER THE SHADOW OF A LIFEBOAT, THREE SAILORS TOSS DICE...



MISSED AGAIN!

HAW! HAW! THAT'S THE FIFTH STRAIGHT PASS I'VE WON! GIMME THEM DICE. I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO MAKE 'EM HOLLER UNCLE!

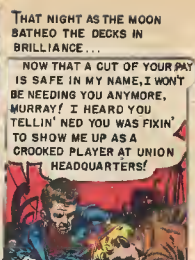
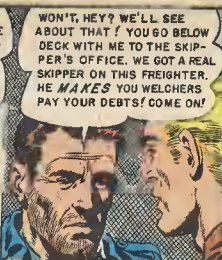


SEVEN! WHAT'D I TELL YA? I CAN'T LOSE TODAY! THAT MAKES OVER HALF YOUR PAY FOR THIS CRUISE THAT I'VE WON! AM I GOING TO HAVE A TIME FOR MYSELF WHEN THIS BOAT DOCKS IN LI'L OLE NEW YORK? I'LL SAY I AM!

SMITHERS, YOU'LL GET NONE OF MY MONEY! YOU CHEATED!

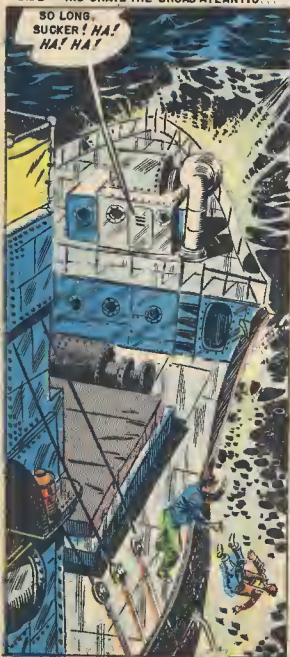
IT CAME UP FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN, A ROTTING **SOMETHING** FROM WHICH THE FLESH SLOUGHED OFF AS IT WALKED. THE HOLLOW; WHERE ITS EYES HAD GLARED OUT AT THE WORLD...AS IF ETERNALLY SEEKING SOMEONE. AS IT WALKED, PAST THE ANCIENT WRECKS, AND THE FISH THAT PLAYED IN THEM, ITS HANDS REACHED OUT, **CLAWING**, AS THOUGH TO REACH THE MAN IT WANTED.

AND IN THE REALM OF THE LIVING, ABLE SEAMAN JOHNNY SMITHERS LAUGHED AND LOVED, NEVER DREAMING THAT DESTINY WAS COMING HIS WAY ON **DEAD FEET**. NO NEED FOR HIM TO WORRY...OR **WAS THERE?**



A BLUNT THUD IN THE NIGHT! A HEAVE OF POWERFUL SHOULDERS AND SEAMAN EDDIE MURRAY GOES HURLING OVER THE SHIP'S SIDE—HIS GRAVE THE BROAD ATLANTIC.

DOWN THROUGH THE COLO DEPTHS OF THE GREEN-GREY WATER SLIDES THE LIMP BODY OF SEAMAN MURRAY...



FOR A LITTLE WHILE A STREAM OF BUBBLES RISES FROM HIS MOUTH. AND AFTER A TIME, THEY STOP.



SLOWLY THE DEAD MAN SETTLES INTO THE OOZE AND MUD OF THE OCEAN'S FLOOR. HIS EYES OPEN TO STARE SIGHTLESSLY. HE STIRS—AND LIFTS AN ARM.



EDDIE MURRAY! YOU ARE DEAD. YOU WERE KILLED BY JOHNNY SMITHERS! REMEMBER? HO. YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER. YOU DIDN'T SEE IT HAPPEN...

WHERE AM I? IS THIS WATER ALL AROUND ME? I'M HOT BREATHING... BUT I FEEL STRONG. AND THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO DO!

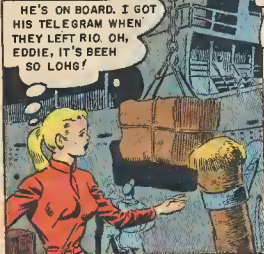


FISH NIBBLING AT MY FLESH... BUT I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING. JUST WANT TO WALK... UNTIL I FIND... WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR...



WHILE THE WALKING HORROR STALKS THE OCEAN BOTTOM, THE HAYANA DOCKS IN NEW YORK...

HE'S ON BOARD. I GOT HIS TELEGRAM WHEN THEY LEFT RIO. OH, EDDIE, IT'S BEEN SO LONG!



DO YOU KNOW A SEAMAN MURRAY? I'M HIS GIRL FRIEND. WE'RE GOING TO GET MARRIED...

SURE, I KNOW HIM. HE GOT DRUNK ONE NIGHT AND FELL OVERBOARD! HMMM... DIDN'T KNOW HE HAD SUCH GOOD TASTE!



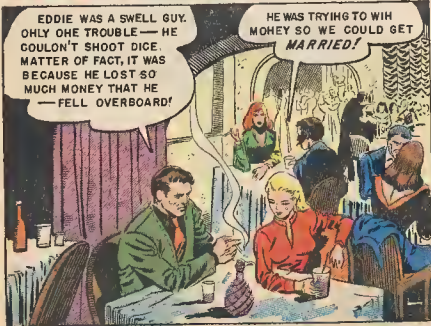
O-OVERBOARD...? SOB! POOR EDDIE... OH, MY POOR DARLING!

HO SENSE CRYIN' OVER WHAT'S HAPPENED! COME ALONG WITH ME AND I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT!



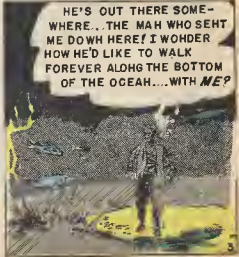
EDDIE WAS A SWELL GUY. ONLY ONE TROUBLE — HE COULDN'T SHOOT DICE. MATTER OF FACT, IT WAS BECAUSE HE LOST SO MUCH MONEY THAT HE — FELL OVERBOARD!

HE WAS TRYING TO WIN MONEY SO WE COULD GET MARRIED!



MOVING SLOWLY PAST THE WRECK OF A LONG SUNKEN SHIP, FEET SLOGGING IN THE MUD, A THING THAT ONCE WAS HUMAN STALKS FORWARD.

HE'S OUT THERE SOMEWHERE... THE MAN WHO SENT ME DOWN HERE! I WONDER HOW HE'D LIKE TO WALK FOREVER ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN... WITH ME?



JOHNNY SMITHERS AND HELEN JONES
SOON FORGET EDDIE MURRAY. IT IS
TOO MUCH FUN BEING ALIVE...

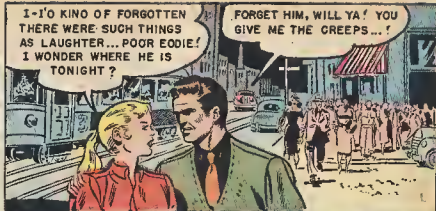
LET YOURSELF
GO, BABY!

I'M HAVING SO
MUCH FUN!



I-I'O KIND OF FORGOTTEN
THERE WERE SUCH THINGS
AS LAUGHTER... POOR EDDIE!
I WONDER WHERE HE IS
TONIGHT?

FORGET HIM, WILL YA! YOU
GIVE ME THE CREEPS...

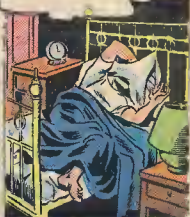


I'LL MAKE YOU FORGET HIM... OHHH...



SOME HOURS LATER, AS JOHNNY
TOSSES IN BED, HE HEARS A VOICE
CALLING...

JOOOHHNNY...
JOHNNY SMITHERS...
CAN YOU HEAR MEEEE? I AM
CALLING TO YOU...



HELLOOOO, JOHNNY! REMEMBER
MEEEE? EDDIE MURRAY! THE MAN
YOU KILLED AND THREW OVER-
BOARD!



I'M COMING FOR YOU,
JOOHNNY! I'M
LONELY DOWN ON
THE BOTTOM OF THE
OCEAN!

NO! GO
AWAY...
YOU'RE
DEAD!
YOU'RE
ROTTING AWAY!
YOU AREN'T
ALIVE...



AAAAAGHHH!
GET AWAY... AGHHH!
NO... NO! I DON'T
WANT TO GO DOWN
THERE... NOT WITH
YOU... AAAAGHHH!





A NIGHTMARE!
SURE, THAT'S
WHAT IT WAS! I'VE
HAD 'EM BEFORE...
BUT NEVER SO
REAL AS THIS!



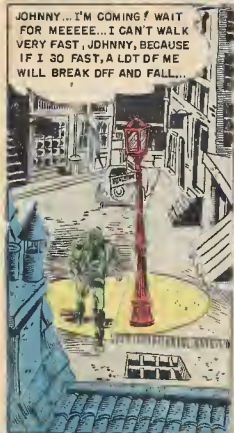
WHAT A SAPI AM TO
GET DRESSED AND COME
WAY DOWN HERE TO THE
DOCKS TO SEE IF... IF
MY DREAM WOULD
COME TRUE!



GUESS I'M JUST PLAIN STUPID!
BUT THAT DREAM WAS SO REAL!
I COULD FEEL HIS **ROTTING**
HANDS! AND THOSE AWFUL,
STARING EYES...



THE WATER IS ALL GONE. I'M
STANDING HERE IN THE
AIR. I'M DN A DOCK. SOME-
WHERE OUT THERE I'LL
FIND HIM...



JOHNNY... I'M COMING! WAIT
FOR MEEEEEE... I CAN'T WALK
VERY FAST, JOHNNY, BECAUSE
IF I GO FAST, A LOT OF ME
WILL BREAK OFF AND FALL...



AHEAD OF THE ROTTING, BLOATED
HORROR...

JOHNNY!
DHH, YOU SCARED
ME. WHY, IT'S ALMOST
MORNING. HAVEN'T
YOU BEEN
TO BED?

I COULDN'T
SLEEP! HELEN-
MARRY ME!
COME AWAY
WITH ME. TO
THE COUNTRY...
OR SOMEWHERE!
I--I DON'T WANT
TO BE ANYWHERE
NEAR THE SEA!



OF COURSE I WILL, DEAR,
WHY, YOU'RE SHAKING.
THERE, NOW, GIVE ME A
FEW DAYS TO BUY SOME
CLOTHES, AND WE'LL GO
ON OUR HONEYMOON!

A FEW DAYS...?
NO! NO, IT'S GOT
TO BE NOW!



I HAVE PLENTY
OF MONEY. MONEY
I WON FROM—
FROM A FRIEND!
PLEASE, HELEN!



YES...
YES, DEAR!



SWELL, I'LL
MEET YOU AT
CITY HALL!



THE BOTTOM
OF THE SEA IS
SOLO AND
LONELY, JOHNNY.
I WANT SOMEONE
TO WALK WITH ME!





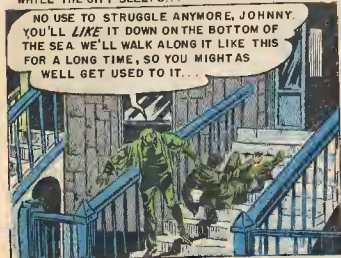
HELEN! WAKE UP! CALL THE POLICE! HELP! PULL ME LOOSE FROM THIS HORROR! HIS FLESH IS ROTTEN! HELP!

JOHNNY SMITHERS GOES MAD! THE FEEL OF THAT COLD AND SLIMY HAND, SENOS COLO SHUOOSERS DOWN HIS SPINE...

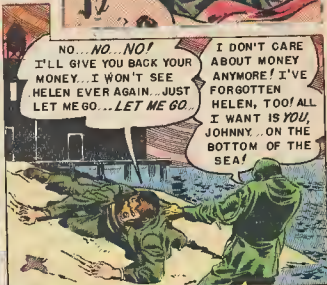
HELEN! IF YOU'LL ONLY GRAB MY HAND... I CAN BREAK FREE OF HIM. HELEN! WAKE UP---HELEN!!



IN THE EARLY DAWN OF A NEW YORK MORNING... WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS...



NO USE TO STRUGGLE ANYMORE, JOHNNY. YOU'LL LIKE IT DOWN ON THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA. WE'LL WALK ALONG IT LIKE THIS FOR A LONG TIME, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL GET USED TO IT...



NO... NO... NO! I'LL GIVE YOU BACK YOUR MONEY... I WON'T SEE HELEN EVER AGAIN... JUST LET ME GO... LET ME GO...

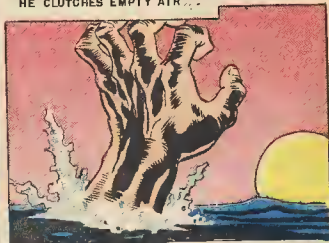
I DON'T CARE ABOUT MONEY ANYMORE! I'VE FORGOTTEN HELEN, TOO! ALL I WANT IS YOU, JOHNNY... ON THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!



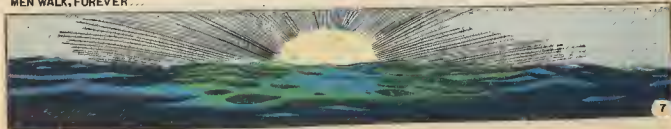
JUST THINK, JOHNNY! YOU'RE GOING TO WALK THE OCEAN FLOOR WITH THE MAN YOU MURDERED!

NO... NO...

JOHNNY'S SCREAM GURGLES IN HIS THROAT. HE CLUTCHES EMPTY AIR...



AND THEN THERE IS JUST EMPTY WATER, ROLLING ENDLESSLY OVER THE OCEAN FLOOR WHERE TWO MEN WALK, FOREVER...



a honeymoon of **HORROR!**

SMITH

SALLY RICHARDS

BELOVED WIFE
OF
NEIL RICHARDS
1928-1951

THE CEREMONY ENDED AND SALLY AND NEIL RICHARDS WERE MAN AND WIFE. BUT LITTLE DID THEY REALIZE THAT THE CHILLING HAND OF **DEATH** HAD BEEN AT THE ORGAN, ACCOMPANYING THEM DOWN THE AISLE TO THE STRAINS OF A **FUNERAL MARCH...** SPINNING A WEB OF **VIOLENCE AND TERROR** AS THEY STARTED ON A **HONEYMOON OF HORROR.**

by Dave Karp

SO LONG, MOM
AND DAD. SALLY,
I'LL WRITE
YOU AS SOON
AS WE GET TO
CENTRAL FALLS.

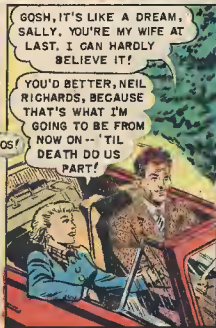
DON'T WORRY
ABOUT US,
SON. YOU KIDS
HAVE FUN AND
MAKE YOUR
HONEYMOON
SOMETHING TO
REMEMBER. GOOD
BYE, MR. AND MRS.
RICHARDS!

GOSH, IT'S LIKE A DREAM.
SALLY, YOU'RE MY WIFE AT
LAST. I CAN HARDLY
BELIEVE IT!

YOU'D BETTER, NEIL
RICHARDS, BECAUSE
THAT'S WHAT I'M
GOING TO BE FROM
NOW ON -- 'TIL
DEATH DO US
PART!

BRR-- DO YOU HAVE TO GET SO
GRIM ABOUT IT? I'D RATHER
TALK ABOUT MORE PLEASANT...
WAIT--WHAT'S THAT?

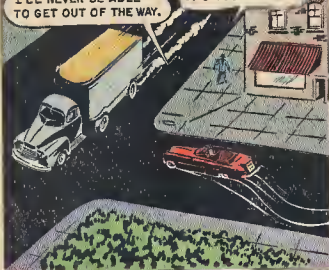
NEIL, DARLING--
COMING OUT OF THAT
SIDE STREET! WATCH
OUT!



GOOD HEAVENS--
IT'S COMING SO FAST,
I'LL NEVER BE ABLE
TO GET OUT OF THE WAY.

HURRY, NEIL--PLEASE!
CUT THE WHEEL BEFORE
IT'S TOO LATE!

THE PROTESTING SQUEAL OF BRAKES MINGLES
WITH AGONIZING SCREAMS OF A HUMAN VOICE--
FOR ONE FATEFUL MOMENT. THEN...



SILENCE HANGS OVER THE CRASH
LIKE A PALL OF DEATH. THEN,
FEEBLE STIRRINGS SOUND AS...

WH...WHERE
AM I? WAIT---
I REMEMBER,
SALLY--SALLY--
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

LOOK, TOM,
ONE OF
THEM'S ALIVE.
LET'S SEE
WHAT WE
CAN DO!



MY WIFE--SHE'S
PINNED IN THERE.
I'VE GOT TO GET
TO HER. WE
CAN'T LET
HER DIE.

HOLO ON,
BUO, YOU CAN'T
MOVE THAT
STUFF BY
YOURSELF. I'LL
GIVE YOU A HAND.
WAIT--THERE'S NO
NEED TO HURRY
NOW.



SORRY, MISTER,
BUT SHE'S
DEAD!

YOU'RE LYING--
SHE CAN'T
BE! SALLY--
MY WIFE...
NO!



FOR DAYS, NEIL
RICHARDS IS A
MAN LIVING IN
A SHAQOW
WORLO. HIS WIFE'S
FUNERAL, BURIAL,
-- EVERYTHING
IS LOST IN THE
OIM HAZE OF A
SORROW-CRUSHED
MIND. ONLY ONE
THING IS REAL--
THE GRAVE.
AND DAY AFTER
DAY, NEIL RE-
TURNS TO KEEP
A MOURNFUL
VIGIL, AS...

I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU, SALLY DEAR,
NEVER! OH, IF ONLY I COULD SEE
YOU, HEAR YOU... TOUCH YOU ONCE
MORE. I' O DO ANYTHING FOR THAT.



YES, SALLY, I'O EVEN SACRIFICE
MY LIFE AND ETERNAL SOUL TO
BE WITH YOU. WAIT--WHO'S THAT?





GOOD EVENING, MR. RICHARDS! I HOPE I HEARD YOU CORRECTLY! YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID?

CERTAINLY, I WAS, YOU FOOL! WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

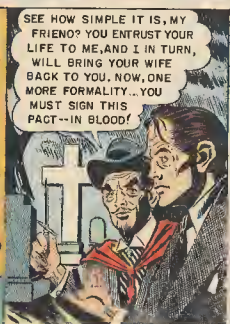


JUST CALL ME MR. PRIM-- A FRIEND IN YOUR TIME OF NEED, RICHARDS. IT IS WITHIN MY POWER TO HELP YOU SEE YOUR BELOVED WIFE AGAIN.

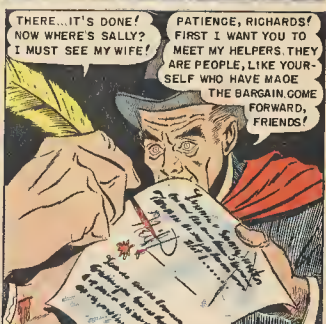
WHAT? HOW CAN YOU DO THIS? TELL ME... QUICKLY!



BLINDED BY THE UNREASONING DESIRE OF A GRIEF-FILLED MIND, RICHARDS LISTENS TO A STRANGE BARGAIN OFFERED BY THE DARK STRANGER, AS...

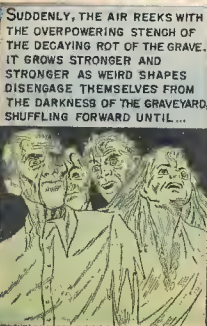


SEE HOW SIMPLE IT IS, MY FRIEND? YOU ENTRUST YOUR LIFE TO ME, AND I IN TURN, WILL BRING YOUR WIFE BACK TO YOU. NOW, ONE MORE FORMALITY... YOU MUST SIGN THIS PACT--IN BLOOD!



THERE... IT'S DONE! NOW WHERE'S SALLY? I MUST SEE MY WIFE!

PATIENCE, RICHARDS! FIRST I WANT YOU TO MEET MY HELPERS. THEY ARE PEOPLE, LIKE YOURSELF WHO HAVE MADE THE BARGAIN. COME FORWARD, FRIENDS!



SUDDENLY, THE AIR REEKS WITH THE OVERPOWERING STENCH OF THE DECAYING ROT OF THE GRAVE. IT GROWS STRONGER AND STRONGER AS WEIRD SHAPES DISENGAGE THEMSELVES FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE GRAVEYARD, SHUFFLING FORWARD UNTIL...



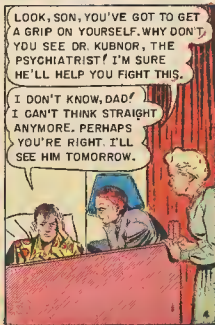
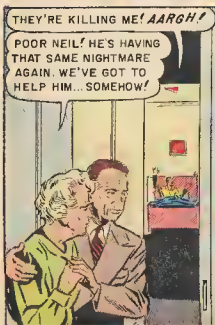
GOOD LORD-- WHO ARE THESE HORRIBLE CREATURES, MR. PRIM?

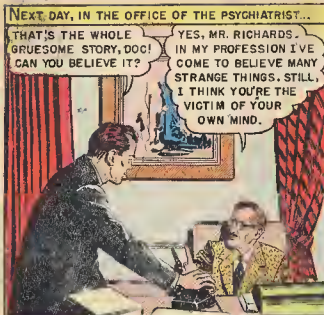
THEY, TOO, SIGNED THE PACT AND ARE UNITED IN DEATH WITH THEIR LOVED ONES. THEY'RE HERE TO WELCOME YOU AND YOUR WIFE AMONG THEM.



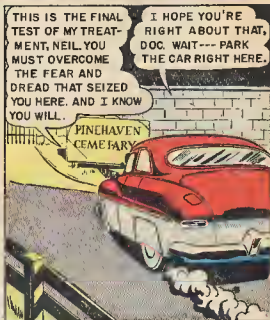
SLOWLY, THE OVERWHELMING GHASTLINESS OF WHAT HE'S DONE BECOMES CLEAR TO NEIL.

NO, PRIM, I WON'T LET YOU DO THIS TO SALLY AND ME. I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT I WAS DOING. YOU'RE THE DEVIL INCARNATE!





SLOWLY AND PAINFULLY, UNDER THE EXPERT CARE OF DOCTOR KUBNOR, NEIL RICHARDS BEGINS TO FIND HIS WAY BACK TO THE WORLD OF REALITY AND SENSE... THEN ONE DARK NIGHT, WEEKS LATER...



STOP IT-- YOU DON'T
EXIST! YOU'RE JUST
A PHANTOM OF MY
IMAGINATION.
GO AWAY!



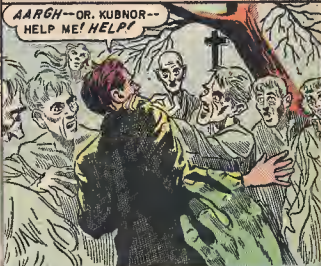
DON'T BE A FOOL, RICHARDS!
TONIGHT I HAVE A LOVELY
SURPRISE FOR YOU. LOOK,
MY FRIEND!

IT... IT'S SALLY! YOU FILTHY
BEAST--YOU'VE MADE HER
ONE OF YOUR OEVIL'S-
SPAWN!



QUITE THE CONTRARY,
MY DEAR RICHARDS,
YOU OIO. I HAVE
YOUR SIGNATURE
TO PROVE IT, TOO.
BUT, WE WASTE
PRECIOUS TIME
TALKING. THE
MOMENT HAS
COME FOR YOU
TO JOIN YOUR
BRIDE. TAKE
HIM, MY FRIENDS!

AT THE COMMAND OF THEIR MASTER, THE UNGLEAN
OWELLERS OF THE GROUND CREEP CLOSER AND
CLOSER TO NEIL RICHARDS. SUOONELY...



AARGH--OR. KUBNOR--
HELP ME! HELP!

AS OUTSIDE THE GEMETERY...

I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE
TOUGH ON THE BOY, BUT IT'S
THE ONLY WAY TO CURE HIS
FEARS. I HOPE HE'S... WAIT--
THAT SCREAM! IT'S NEIL!



I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM... AND
QUICKLY! I'VE NEVER HEARD
A HUMAN VOICE SO ANGUISHED.
WHAT'S THAT UP AHEAD?



GOOD HEAVENS... THOSE
HIDEOUS, MISSHAPEN THINGS.
THEY SEEM TO BE CARRYING
OFF SOMEONE. IT'S TOO DARK...
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING
CLEARLY.



THEY'RE *INHUMAN*--- NO MAN COULD HAVE DREAMED OF THESE BEINGS. FIGHT THEM, NEIL, I'M COMING!



BUT AS THE DOCTOR HASTENS TO AID HIS STRUGGLING FRIEND, HIS FOOT SINKS INTO THE SLIME OF A GRAVE, AND...



NOW ONLY THE DISMAL MOANING OF THE WIND IN THE TREES BREAKS THE HUSH OF THE DEAD. SOMETIME LATER...

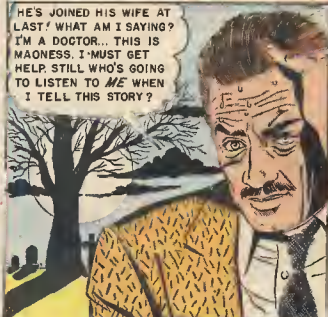
OH... MY HEAD--- WAIT, I MUST FIND THE BOY! NEIL... NEIL... WHERE ARE YOU?



THERE'S HIS WIFE'S GRAVE! GOOD LORD---THOSE FOOT-PRINTS COULD ONLY BE HIS! THEY GO RIGHT TO THE EDGE OF THE GRAVE AND *DISAPPEAR!*



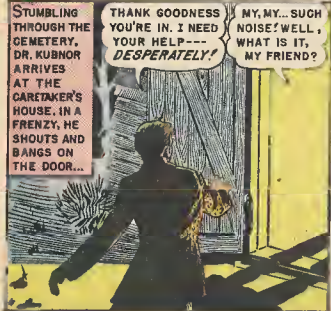
HE'S JOINED HIS WIFE AT LAST! WHAT AM I SAYING? I'M A DOCTOR... THIS IS MAONESS. I MUST GET HELP. STILL WHO'S GOING TO LISTEN TO *ME* WHEN I TELL THIS STORY?



STUMBLING THROUGH THE CEMETERY, DR. KUBNOR ARRIVES AT THE CARETAKER'S HOUSE. IN A FRENZY, HE SHOUTS AND BANGS ON THE DOOR...

THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE IN. I NEED YOUR HELP--- *DESPERATELY!*

MY, MY... SUCH NOISE! WELL, WHAT IS IT, MY FRIEND?



I'LL SAY YOU DO. YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU'VE JUST SEEN A GHOST! COME IN, AND I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU!



THE END



The Story Behind The Cover...

The CHAMBER of DEATH!

THE THING that I am about to relate happened to me on what was to be the first and last day of my service as a rookie policeman. It also accounts for my decision to leave the force the next day, as well as to leave that cursed city as well. I have never spoken of it for fear of my sanity being questioned, but I am now writing it for the record.

I had been assigned to the outskirts of the city; a lonely beat that ran alongside the cemetery which borders the city line. Being the newest man at the precinct, I drew the worst hours and the loneliest beat—the hours immediately after midnight, and the walk along and through the cemetery.

It was a moonless night and cold. I started walking my beat at midnight with the discordant ringing of the cracked bell at the cemetery chapel gonging out the hour. There was no one in sight, not even a keeper at the gates. I walked along the picket fence at the graveyard's edge, through the rusty gates, and along the overgrown path through the center of the cemetery.

We had to patrol there, for several ugly crimes had occurred in that deserted spot. The cemetery was very old, much of it had long gone to rot and decay; rumor had it that the first settlers had placed it on the site of an old Indian, and possibly pre-Indian graveyard, that had been there for centuries before the Pilgrims came to this part of New England. I walked, my shoes echoing empty against the lonely ground. Tombstones leaned at crazy angles, white and grey, in the night; an occasional weather-streaked and neglected mausoleum

shone whitely amid the weeds as my searchlight played over it. I saw no one.

Then I noticed a light. An eerily swaying, flickering, greenish light, moving somewhere over in the darkest and oldest part of the cemetery. I stopped and watched it, then started silently across the graves towards it. I wanted to seize whoever the intruder was, and I didn't want to warn them of my presence.

It seemed to be moving around an old mausoleum, and as I drew closer, it seemed to disappear inside the tomb! I reached the spot seconds afterwards. The light was gone, but the ancient crumbling stone vault had been opened—for its greenish bronze door was ajar.

I grabbed the edge of the door, swung it silently open. I saw before me that instead of the inside of a tomb, there was a flight of stone steps—going down into the subterranean depths! Into the areas below the graveyard. Down, disappearing on those steps, was that flickering, weird light!

I followed, closing the door, but not allowing it to shut altogether. I was in total darkness save for that eerie glimmer, swaying down the stone steps far below me!

Down the stairs I went, silently, guided by that ghostly light. I must have descended several hundred steps, far below the ground, far below the level of the city, when at last the steps ended on the floor of an old abandoned sewer.

The floor of the sewer, unknown to the city, was ankle deep in stinking, stagnant water—seepage from the worm-rotten earth above. Before me, in that passage beneath the graveyard, the greenish light was bob-

bing, and now I saw that there were two such lights!

I followed them as silently as I could. All about me there was darkness and damp, about my feet the cold vile water slushed. The rotting brick walls were slimy to the touch. The squeak of rats and the swish of their loathsome bodies in the water came to me. Then, somehow, I had come around a bend and found that I had taken some sort of short cut, for the bearers of the lights were passing directly before me.

What I saw I shall never forget. The thing, the awful thing that led—for there were three figures in single file—was a creature of sheer nightmare, a product of Satan's nethermost hell! It was huge, seven or eight feet, and its head was a bare and grinning skull. Rags covered its huge bony frame—moldy corpse rags—and it leaned upon a bone for support that could have come from no monster that ever walked this earth! Cackling upon its shoulder, chained there, was a vile batlike thing with rubbery wings and a monkey's face. The skeleton monster carried a lantern, a flickering green flame within it, and a chain from that hand swung back to connect with the wrist of . . . a girl.

She walked directly behind the skeleton, and she stared before her without expression. Her eyes were stunned with horror, her hair fell in disarray about her shoulders, she walked in bare feet through the dirty water, and there was something about her features that made me think I knew her. But I could not seem to remember where I had seen her. The chain on her wrist continued on to end in the hand of an old and bearded man who walked last in line, carrying another lantern. His lined and timelessly evil face looked like that of Father Time.

The three passed without noticing me. I followed slowly after them, in a daze of horror, my mind reeling as I tried to figure out the meaning of it all. From time to time, I noticed the skeletons that lay on the tunnel floor, the batlike monsters that

squawked and yammered as the trio passed—then ahead at last I saw that the tunnel came to an end in a haze of sullen red light.

I watched them grow closer to that tunnel's end, and I saw that it was the opening of some sort of great chamber, an area lit with a red flickering glow, like some giant oven. They vanished across the threshold and to that spot I myself staggered until at last I stood at the very end of the tunnel passage and gazed into the hidden underground chamber.

It was a cavern that seemed to have no end, that seemed to go down and down into the very bowels of the earth. Red fires danced through it and the shapes of horrible beings leered and did unspeakable things within it. I cannot describe it—no description could do it justice.

I fled then; I fled wildly, madly, in an insane frenzy. I ran through the sewer, retracing my path, the bat-things screaming at me and flapping rubberly around me, the skeletons cracking beneath my flying feet. Somehow I found my way back, somehow I clambered up those hundreds of time-worn stairs, reached the door of the old tomb, slammed it shut, and fled screaming from the cemetery, back to the lamp-lit streets of the sleeping city.

For I knew where I had been. I had at last remembered where I had seen that girl. It had been her face I had seen in the papers that very day, sullen and unrepentant. It had been she, the murderess who had slain her family in cold blood, who had gone to the gallows that very night, who had been hung by the state for foul murder, and consigned for her evil to everlasting damnation.

It was she that the demons had taken. It was her cursed soul that had marched in chains through the ancient cemetery and down into the haunted ground under the guard of Satan's own messengers—and it was to the very gates of Hell itself I had followed her, and I had looked for one ghastly moment into that crimson-flamed chamber.

THE END

THE STRANGER IN STUDIO X!

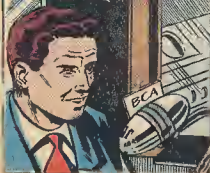


IT WAS THE *WEIRDEST* FIFTEEN MINUTES THAT *ANYONE* AT RADIO STATION WBOR EVER REMEMBERED. THE *SPINE TINGLING* SERIES OF MISADVENTURES, WHICH MADE THAT NIGHT SO MEMORABLE, BEGAN EXACTLY AT *MIDNIGHT*, ON AN OTHERWISE ROUTINE EVENING...AND THERE WERE THOSE WHO SAW IN THE OCCURRENCES OF THE NEXT QUARTER HOUR THE SORT OF EERIE PUZZLE TO WHICH *NO MAN* WOULD EVER FIND AN ANSWER. THOSE NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN MOMENTS OF *BEWILDERMENT* AND *FEAR* STARTED IN THE MIDDLE OF DAWN CREIGHTON'S POPULAR DISC JOCKEY PROGRAM...STARTED, IN FACT, AT THE VERY MOMENT THE DOOR TO CREIGHTON'S BROADCASTING BOOTH OPENED, AND IN WALKED...*"THE STRANGER IN STUDIO X!"*

THE TWELVE O'CLOCK TIME-SIGNAL HAD JUST SOUNDED, ON WBOR'S MOST POPULAR PLATTER-SPINNING PROGRAM...

...IT IS NOW MIDNIGHT, FOLKS...HALF-WAY THROUGH THE PROGRAM THAT NONE OF US WILL EVER BE ABLE TO FORGET!

STUDIO X
ON THE AIR



AND HERE, NIGHT OWLS, IS THE RECORD THAT SO MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN REQUESTING IN YOUR TELEPHONE CALLS TO ME...



HEY, THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A PRIVATE STUDIO, MISTER...NO ONE'S ALLOWED IN HERE WHILE THE PROGRAM'S ON THE AIR!





LET'S GET OUT OF RANGE
OF THAT MIKE! HOW'D
YOU HAPPEN TO BE
WANDERING AROUND
UP HERE, ANYWAY?

I JUST STEPPED OFF
THE ELEVATOR AND
THOUGHT I'D MOSEY
AROUND. NO ONE WAS
HERE TO STOP ME...



THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, MISTER! THE
GUARD ON THIS FLOOR IS MIKE ALLAN...
AND HE NEVER LETS ANYONE WANDER
AROUND! NO ONE
GETS PAST
MIKE...

M-MIKE
ALLAN...
W-WHY
HE'S THE
ONE...



...T-THE MAN WHO JUST
DIED DOWN THE HALLWAY!



D-DIED? MIKE ALLAN... DEAD?
I-I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT...
HE'S BEEN AROUND HERE SINCE
WHOR FIRST OPENED ITS DOORS!
H-H WAS THE FIRST FRIEND
I HAD HERE...



L-LOOK...WHOEVER YOU ARE...
STICK AROUND FOR A COUPLE
OF MINUTES, WILL YOU? I WANT
TO SEE IF THERE'S ANYTHING I
CAN DO TO HELP...THE LEAST
I CAN DO FOR AN OLD PAL
LIKE MIKE ALLAN!



DUEE! I SAW MIKE NOT
MORE THAN AN HOUR AGO,
WHEN HE GAVE ME HIS
USUAL "TOP OF THE
EVENING, MR. CREIGHTON!"
AND NOW... NOW POOR OLD
MIKE'S GONE!



AND THE STRANGEST THING
ABOUT THE WHOLE EPISODE IS
THIS GHOULISH-LOOKING GUY
WHO WANDERED INTO STUDO X
TO TELL ME ABOUT IT! THOSE
GLASSES OF HIS... H-HEY! UP
AT THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS..!



M-MIKE! MIKE ALLAN!
I JUST HEARD THE CRAZIEST
STORY ABOUT YOU, DLD-
TIMER! SOME WEIRD CHARACTER
SNEAKED INTO STUDIO X DURING
MY BROADCAST AND TOLD ME
THAT YOU...HEH,
HEH...THIS'LL KILL
YOU WHEN YOU
HEAR IT...



I'LL BE RIGHT
DOWN, SON...
I'LL...

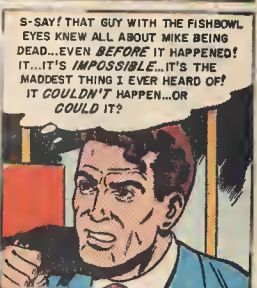
W-WATCH
DUT, MIKE!
THAT RUG!



NO...NO! IT
CAN'T BE
HAPPENING...
LIKE A
NIGHTMARE...!



MIKE... DEAD! HIS NECK SNAPPED
LIKE A TWIG ON THAT FALL
DOWN THE STAIRS... NOW
HE'S GONE, JUST LIKE
THAT GHOUL IN STUDIO
X SAID HE WOULD BE!



S-SAY! THAT GUY WITH THE FISHBOWL
EYES KNEW ALL ABOUT MIKE BEING
DEAD...EVEN BEFORE IT HAPPENED!
IT...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...IT'S THE
MADDEST THING I EVER HEARD OF!
IT COULDN'T HAPPEN...OR
COULD IT?

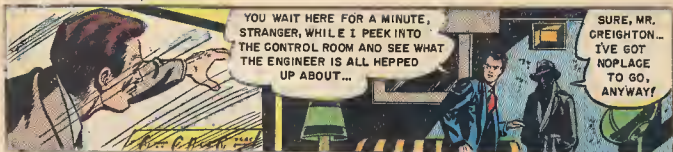


I-I'VE GOT TO GET BACK
TO THE STUDIO BEFORE
THAT STRANGER GETS
AWAY! THERE ARE QUES-
TIONS I WANT TO ASK
HIM...HE KNOWS...
TOO MUCH!

I PUT ANOTHER RECORDING
ON FOR YOU, MR. CREIGHTON...
THEN THE TELEPHONE RANG...
SOMEBODY WANTED YOU
TO PLAY...



NEVER MIND THAT!
SOMETHING FISHY
GOING ON AROUND
HERE... AND YOU'RE
THE ONE WHO CAN
STRAIGHTEN ME OUT! MIKE
ALLAN WAS ALIVE UNTIL
A MINUTE AGO, YET YOU
TOLD ME...



YOU WAIT HERE FOR A MINUTE, STRANGER, WHILE I PEEK INTO THE CONTROL ROOM AND SEE WHAT THE ENGINEER IS ALL HEPPED UP ABOUT...

SURE, MR. CREIGHTON... I'VE GOT NOPLACE TO GO, ANYWAY!



...AND I TELL YOU HE'S A MANIAC, DON'T I WAS BUSY IN HERE WITH THE CONTROL PANEL AND COULDN'T STOP HIM FROM PICKING UP THE MIKE! BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING HE ANNOUNCED THAT MARTIN ZANOER, PRESIDENT OF STATION WBOB, HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE AT 10 MINUTES AFTER MIDNIGHT!

WHAT?



WHERE YOU GOING, OON?

OUT TO RETRACT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT! THAT LUNATIC ANNOUNCED THE BOSSES DEATH AT 10 AFTER MIDNIGHT... AND IT'S ONLY 12:09 RIGHT NOW!

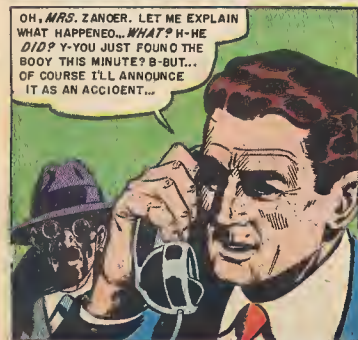


LEAVE THAT TELEPHONE WHERE IT IS! IT'S PROBABLY THE BOSS CALLING TO TELL ME I'M FIRED!



HERE IT IS, MR. CREIGHTON. I'M AFRAID THAT IT CAN'T POSSIBLY BE...

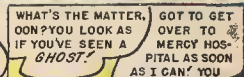
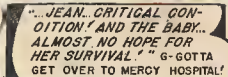
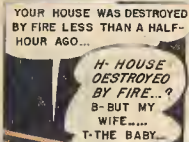
GIVE IT HERE... AND SHUT UP! SIT DOWN SOMEPLACE... THERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU'RE GOING TO ANSWER!



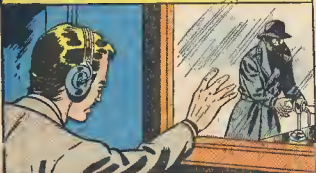
OH, MRS. ZANOER. LET ME EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED... WHAT? H-HE DID? Y-YOU JUST FOUND THE BODY THIS MINUTE? B-BUT... OF COURSE I'LL ANNOUNCE IT AS AN ACCIDENT...



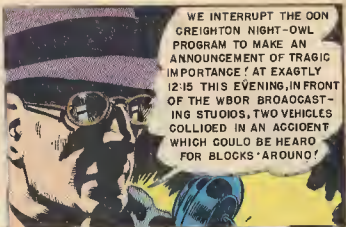
ZANOER IS DEAD! THEY FOUND HIS BODY AT 12:10... YET YOU ANNOUNCED HIS SUICIDE AT LEAST TWO MINUTES BEFORE THAT!



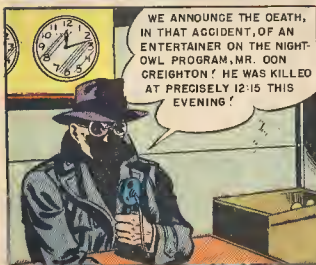
NO SOONER HAO FRIGHTNEEO OON GREIGHTON
FLEO FROM STUDIO X THAN THE STRANGER
LEANEO FORWARD...



WE INTERRUPT THE OON
GREIGHTON NIGHT-OWL
PROGRAM TO MAKE AN
ANNOUNCEMENT OF TRAGIC
IMPORTANCE! AT EXACTLY
12:15 THIS EVENING, IN FRONT
OF THE WBOR BROADCAST-
ING STUDIOS, TWO VEHICLES
COLLIDED IN AN ACCIDENT
WHICH COULD BE HEARD
FOR BLOCKS 'AROUND!



WE ANNOUNCE THE DEATH,
IN THAT ACCIDENT, OF AN
ENTERTAINER ON THE NIGHT-
OWL PROGRAM, MR. OON
GREIGHTON! HE WAS KILLED
AT PRECISELY 12:15 THIS
EVENING!



O-DON... DEAD! IT CAN'T BE!
IT'S ONLY 12:14 NOW... AND HE
SAID 12:15! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...
AND YET...



I-IT'S OLD MIKE,
ALL RIGHT! MUST
HAVE TOPPLED
DOWN THE STAIRS
AND BROKEN HIS
NECK!

HAPPENEO AROUND
MIDNIGHT AS
CLOSE AS WE CAN
FIGURE!

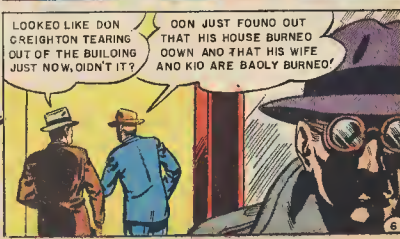


HEAR ABOUT OLD MAN ZANDER? CLOSED HIS
GARAGE DOORS, TURNED ON HIS CAR MOTOR AND
WENT TO SLEEP! HAPPENEO JUST A COUPLA MINUTES
AFTER MIDNIGHT FROM WHAT I HEAR... STRANGEST
THING I EVER RUN ACROSS!



LOOKED LIKE DON
GREIGHTON TEARING
OUT OF THE BUILDING
JUST NOW, DIDN'T IT?

OON JUST FOUND OUT
THAT HIS HOUSE BURNED
DOWN AND THAT HIS WIFE
AND KID ARE BAOLY BURNED!





SEE THAT CAR
COME WHIPPING
AROUND THE
CORNER? MUST
HAVE BEEN GOING
SEVENTY!

GUY JUST STEPPED
OFF THE CURB,
TOO! HE'S SMASHED
UP SO BAD YOU
CAN HARDLY
RECOGNIZE 'IM!



NEVER SEEN ANYTHING
SO GRUESOME IN MY
LIFE! SOMEBODY CALL
FOR AN AMBULANCE...
NOT THAT IT'S GOING
TO DO *THIS* POOR GUY
ANY GOOD ANYMORE!

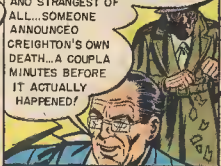


HERE'S THE GUY'S
WALLET...LET'S SEE
IF IT TELLS WHO HE
WAS! HMMM...HERE'S
AN IDENTITY CARD...
**DONALD M.
GREIGHTON...**

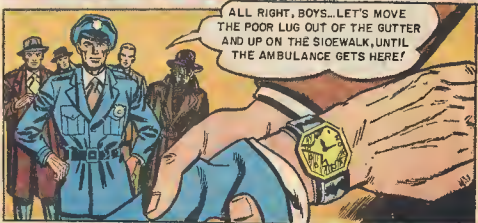


GREIGHTON...?
S-SAY...HE'S THE
GUY WHO RUNS
THAT DISK JOCKEY
PROGRAM RIGHT
DOWN THE STREET
AT *WBOR*! FUNNY
THING...HIS PROGRAM
WAS ALL QUEERED
UP TONIGHT...

NO SOONER DID HE SAY "*IT IS
NOW MIDNIGHT*" THAN EVERY-
THING SEEMED TO GO HAYWIRE!
VOICES SORT OF ARGUING IN THE
BACKGROUND...RUNNING FEET...THE
WEIRDEST THING YOU EVER HEARD!
AND STRANGEST OF
ALL...SOMEONE
ANNOUNCED
GREIGHTON'S OWN
DEATH...A COUPLE
MINUTES BEFORE
IT ACTUALLY
HAPPENED!



ALL RIGHT, BOYS...LET'S MOVE
THE POOR LUG OUT OF THE GUTTER
AND UP ON THE SIDEWALK, UNTIL
THE AMBULANCE GETS HERE!



IF ANYONE HAD
NOTICED, A MAN
WITH THICK-
LENSED GLASSES
TURNED AND
WALKED SLOWLY
DOWN THE STREET
AT THAT MOMENT...



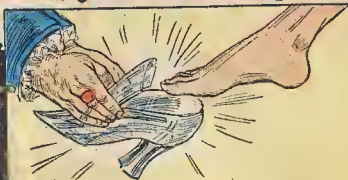
...THE LAST TIME ANYONE FROM STATION
WBOR IS KNOWN TO HAVE SEEN...
"THE STRANGER IN STUDIO X!"

**THE
END**

DO YOU KNOW?



THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS CONDUCTED THEIR TRIALS IN DARKNESS SO THAT JUDGES WOULD NOT BE SWAYED BY THE APPEARANCE OF PRISONERS OR WITNESSES. HENCE, THE EXPRESSION "JUSTICE IS BLIND"



CINDERELLA'S GLASS SLIPPER WAS ORIGINALLY FUR. THROUGH THE MISTAKE OF A BAD TRANSLATOR IT BECAME THE FAMILIAR GLASS ONE WE KNOW TODAY.



IN 1514, SIR JOHN WALLOP, BRITISH ADMIRAL, SUCCEEDED IN THRASHING THE FRENCH NAVY SO WELL THAT THE EXPRESSION "WE WALLOPED THEM" CAME INTO BEING, ADDING A NEW WORD, "WALLOP", TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

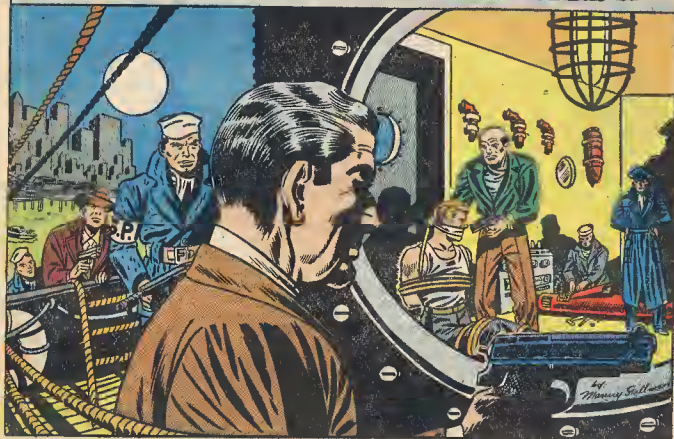


THE WORD "RYE" IN THE SONG "COMING THROUGH THE RYE" REFERS TO THE RIVER RYE IN SCOTLAND. IF A BOY CATCHES A GIRL COMING THROUGH THE RYE, (WADING), HE MAY CLAIM A KISS.



THE EXPRESSION "DEAD AS A HERRING" ARISES FROM THE FACT THAT NO HERRING HAS EVER BEEN TAKEN ALIVE. THEY DIE INSTANTLY ON BEING REMOVED FROM THE WATER.

NIGHTMARE!



IN THEIR GREED FOR *POWER* SOME NATIONS MIGHT GO TO *ANY* LENGTH TO DESTROY THOSE WHO STAND IN THEIR WAY TO ACHIEVE *WORLD DOMINATION*. NOW THAT THE SECRET OF THE *ATOM BOMB* IS KNOWN TO OTHERS, THE UNITED STATES MUST BE DOUBLY CAREFUL OF ATTACK WITH ITS *DWN* WEAPON. U.S. AGENT *ANDRIKO BANOFF* HELD THE KNOWLEDGE OF JUST SUCH AN ATTACK. ON HIM RESTED THE FATE OF *THOUSANDS* OF LIVES AND THE *DESTRUCTION* OF NEW YORK HARBOR.

A TOTALITARIAN PORT IN EASTERN EUROPE WHERE THE FREIGHTER KARIS RECEIVES A PECULIAR CARGO IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT...

THEY ARRIVED RIGHT ON TIME. WE'LL BE ABLE TO SAIL WITHIN THE HOUR!

THEY ARE ALWAYS ON TIME. I OFTEN WONDER IF THEY ARE HUMAN. Y!! LOOK AT THAT!

CAREFUL, YOU FOOL! THAT CARGO'S TOO DELICATE TO TAKE CHANCES WITH! WATCH YOUR STEP!

I DON'T LIKE THIS. WHY COULDN'T THEY HAVE CHOSEN SOME OTHER SHIP?



SHORTLY AFTER THE KARIS SAILS FROM THE CLOSELY GUARDED PIER AND BY DAWN IS FAR OUT AT SEA..

VERY PECULIAR THINGS GO ON ABOARD THIS SHIP. LAST NIGHT THEY BROUGHT ON VERY MYSTERIOUS BOXES...WRAPPED IN LEAD! AN HOUR LATER WE SAIL. MIGHTY QUEER, EH COMRADE?

BAH! YOU'RE CRAZY!



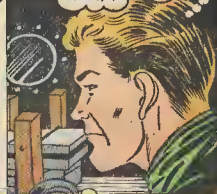
CRAZY, HUH? I WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO HELPED BRING THE BOXES ABOARD. YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD THE CAPTAIN WHEN I SLIPPED.

ENOUGH! I AM NOT INTERESTED. THE LESS I KNOW THE BETTER I DO MY JOB. I AM ONLY A SEAMAN.



BUT LATE THAT NIGHT BANOFF EXPLORES THE BUNKERS OF THE KARIS.

HE WAS RIGHT! THEY'RE WRAPPED IN LEAD ALL RIGHT. WHEN! IF THEY ARE WHAT I THINK I'VE GOT TO GET WORD TO WASHINGTON RIGHT AWAY!



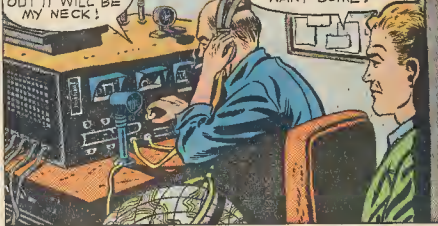
MAYBE I'D BETTER WAIT 'TIL WE HIT MID-ATLANTIC. LESS CHANCE OF INTERFERENCE. HATE TO THINK WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO ME IF THEY KNEW I WAS A U.S. AGENT!



FOUR DAYS LATER, AS THE KARIS PLOWS THROUGH HEAVY SEAS IN MID-ATLANTIC, BANOFF LURES THE WIRELESS OPERATOR FROM HIS SET IN AN EFFORT TO GET A WARNING MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON.

OKAY! BUT IF THE CAPTAIN FINDS OUT IT WILL BE MY NECK!

KINSKI, THERE'S HOT COFFEE UP IN THE GALLEY. I'LL TAKE OVER FOR YOU IF YOU WANT SOME.



REMEMBER, IF ANY CALLS COME, GET ME IN A HURRY, IF YOU DON'T, WE'RE BOTH IN TROUBLE!

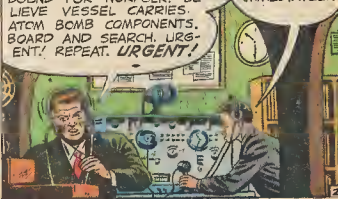
DON'T WORRY, KINSKI! I CAN HANDLE IT ALL RIGHT!



MOMENTS LATER BANOFF'S MESSAGE IS PICKED UP BY AN F.B.I. MONITORING STATION ON THE VIRGINIA COAST...

CHARLIE! LOOK AT THIS! TO QUEEN BEE...AGENT NK4 ABOARD FREIGHTER KARIS BOUND FOR NORFOLK. BELIEVE VESSEL CARRIES ATOM BOMB COMPONENTS. BOARD AND SEARCH. URGENT! REPEAT. URGENT!

WOW! I'LL CALL WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY!



BUT TWO DAYS LATER AND FIFTY MILES OFF NORFOLK A SURPRISING EVENT TAKES PLACE...

SEE, I TOLD YOU THERE WAS SOMETHING GOING ON. NOW THEY ARE CHANGING THE NAME OF THE SHIP TO THE VESTNIA AND WE ARE LANDING IN NEW YORK!

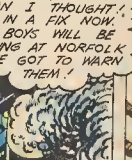
SO WHAT. I DON'T CARE WHERE WE GO AS LONG AS I'M PAID.

THEY'RE SMARTER THAN I THOUGHT. I'M IN A FIX NOW. THE BOYS WILL BE WAITING AT NORFOLK I'VE GOT TO WARN THEM!

BUT THAT NIGHT AS BANOFF APPROACHES THE RADIO CABIN HE FINDS IT GUARDED...

WHAT DO YOU WANT UP HERE, ANDRIKO? I HAVE ORDERS TO KEEP EVERYONE AWAY FROM THE RADIO ROOM!

ACH! YOU FRIGHTENED ME! I WAS JUST GOING TO ASK PETER IF HE WANTED SOME COFFEE. WHAT'S GOING ON, ANYWAY?



I DON'T KNOW! WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. I DON'T ASK QUESTIONS! NOW GET OUT OF HERE!

ALL RIGHT, I'M GOING!

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? IF I DON'T GET WORD ASHORE, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WILL HAPPEN! THEY CAN WRECK THE HARBOR, AND KILL THOUSANDS! I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

DESPERATE, THE FATE OF NEW YORK IN HIS HANDS, BANOFF IS UNABLE TO ACT AS THE DEATH LADEN SHIP ANCHORS IN THE NARROWS...

ALL RIGHT, SHE'S WORKING NOW. SWING THE HOOK OVER.

RIGHT! WATCH OUT BELOW!

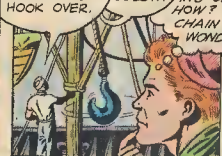
TIME IS WASTING! GOT TO GET A WARNING OUT, BUT HOW? THAT CHAIN! I WONDER...

AS THE CABLE AND HOOK SWEEP THE DECK BANOFF DELIBERATELY STEPS IN ITS PATH...

LOOK OUT!

WELL, HERE GOES... EEEOW!

MAN OVERBOARD! MAN OVERBOARD!



MINUTES LATER...

IT IS TOO BAD! HE NEVER CAME UP. THAT HOOK MUST'VE CRUSHED HIS SKULL.

WE MAY AS WELL GO BACK TO THE SHIP. I GUESS HE'S GONE. POOR ANDRIKO.

PHIEW! NOW IF I CAN SWIM TO SHORE WITHOUT BEING SEEN THERE MIGHT STILL BE TIME.



BACK ON THE FREIGHTER...

I DON'T LIKE IT! HE MAY BE DEAD AND THEN AGAIN HE MAY NOT. WE'LL USE THE EMERGENCY PLAN!

I AGREE. WITH THE BOXES UNDER THE WATER AND THE DUPLICATES IN PLACE WE'LL BE SAFE.



SEE THAT THEY ARE PUT OVER IMMEDIATELY: UNDER THAT BUOY OUT THERE WOULD BE A GOOD SPOT. MAKE SURE THAT THE NORFOLK PAPERS ARE BURNED AND THE NEW ONES IN ORDER.

MEANWHILE, IN THE N.Y. OFFICES OF THE F.B.I....

THEY COVERED THEMSELVES FROM EVERY ANGLE. WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM NOW!

WE'VE NOTIFIED THE HARBOR POLICE AND ALERTED EVERY PORT CITY TO SEARCH ALL SHIPS! YOU'D BETTER GET SOME REST. THAT WAS A ROUGH SWIM.

I FEEL FINE. I WOULDN'T MISS BEING IN ON THE KILL FOR ANYTHING!

YOU CAN COME, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO STAY ON THE DOCK. DON'T WANT THEM TO RECOGNIZE YOU.

I'VE ALREADY DONE SO. AS SOON AS THE BOXES ARE REPLACED WE'LL BE READY FOR ANYONE!



SOMETIME LATER HARBOR POLICE AND F.B.I. AGENTS SWARM ABOARD THE FREIGHTER...

THIS SHIP IS IMPOUNDED. WE ARE SEARCHING HER FOR CONTRABAND.

CONTRABAND! MY DEAR SIR, WE ARE JUST AN ORDINARY FREIGHTER. YOU ARE MISTAKEN, BUT AS YOU WISH. THIS WAY, GENTLEMEN.



I ASSURE YOU YOU WILL FIND NOTHING. WE DO NOT DEAL IN SMUGGLING.

THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN...MAKE IT THOROUGH, BOYS.



THE SEARCHING PARTY DISCOVERS THE DUPLICATE LEAD-COVERED BOXES...

CHIEF! QUICK! I THINK WE'VE FOUND IT!

WAIT! DON'T TOUCH THAT!

STEP ASIDE, CAPTAIN, WE'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT'S IN THOSE!



PLEASE! PLEASE! GENTLEMEN, NO! THESE BOXES *CONTAIN VERY DELICATE SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS THAT WILL BE RUINED BY THE SLIGHTEST CONTACT WITH RADIO-ACTIVITY. I BEG YOU NOT TO OPEN THEM!

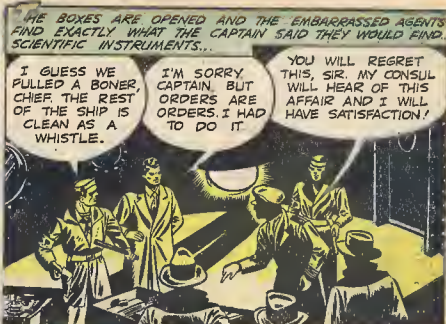
I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT...MOVE HIM OUT OF THERE, BOYS.





STOP! I TELL THE TRUTH! YOU WILL BE SORRY IF YOU OPEN THEM!

NEVER MIND HIM, BOYS, OPEN THEM!

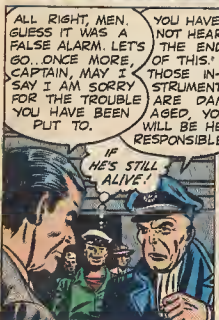


THE BOXES ARE OPENED AND THE EMBARRASSED AGENTS FIND EXACTLY WHAT THE CAPTAIN SAID THEY WOULD FIND. SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS...

I GUESS WE PULLED A BOKER, CHIEF. THE REST OF THE SHIP IS CLEAN AS A WHISTLE.

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN. BUT ORDERS ARE ORDERS. I HAD TO DO IT.

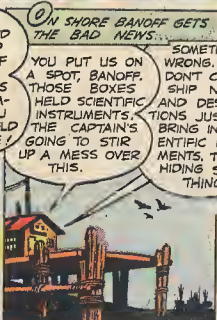
YOU WILL REGRET THIS, SIR. MY CONSUL WILL HEAR OF THIS AFFAIR AND I WILL HAVE SATISFACTION!



ALL RIGHT, MEN. GUESS IT WAS A FALSE ALARM. LET'S GO...ONCE MORE, CAPTAIN, MAY I SAY I AM SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE YOU HAVE BEEN PUT TO.

YOU HAVE NOT HEARD THE END OF THIS! IF THOSE INSTRUMENTS ARE DAMAGED, YOU WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE!

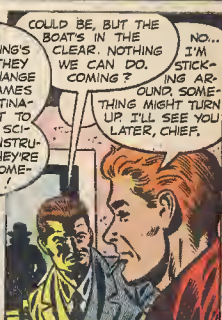
IF HE'S STILL ALIVE!



ON SHORE BANOFF GETS THE BAD NEWS...

YOU PUT US ON A SPOT, BANOFF. THOSE BOXES HELD SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS. THE CAPTAIN'S GOING TO STIR UP A MESS OVER THIS.

SOMETHING'S WRONG. THEY DON'T CHANGE SHIP NAMES AND DESTINATIONS JUST TO BRING IN SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS. THEY'RE HIDING SOMETHING!



COULD BE, BUT THE BOATS IN THE CLEAR. NOTHING WE CAN DO. COMING?

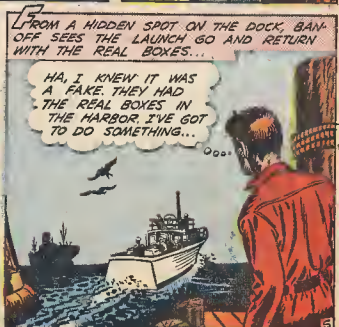
NO... I'M STICKING AROUND. SOMETHING MIGHT TURN UP I'LL SEE YOU LATER, CHIEF.



ABOARD SHIP...

HA-HA-HO-HO! LOOK AT THE FOOLS GO! I'M GLAD THIS HAPPENED. NOW WE ARE THE INJURED INNOCENT. THEY WON'T EVEN WATCH US NOW. SEND OUT THE LAUNCH FOR THE REAL BOXES!

YES, SIR. THE STUPID OXEN WERE COMPLETELY FOOLED. OUR SUPERIORS NEVER LEAVE A LOOSE THREAD, EVERYTHING IS THOUGHT OF!



FROM A HIDDEN SPOT ON THE DOCK, BANOFF SEES THE LAUNCH GO AND RETURN WITH THE REAL BOXES...

HA, I KNEW IT WAS A FAKE. THEY HAD THE REAL BOXES IN THE HARBOR. I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING...

SECONDS LATER..

I MUST FIND OUT WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO. PERHAPS THEY WANT TO SHIP THE BOMB INLAND OR PLANT IT IN THE CITY.



O ON THE FREIGHTER, BANOFF SPIES THROUGH THE CABIN WINDOW AS A SINISTER FIGURE CREEPS UP BEHIND HIM...

HOLY SMOKE, THEY'RE PUTTING IT TOGETHER RIGHT IN THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN. THEY MUST PLAN TO BLOW THE SHIP UP WITH THE BOMB AND THE HARBOR WITH IT.



I WONDER IF THERE IS STILL TIME TO GET THE FB....
UNHH!!

A SPY! THE CAPTAIN WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU... YII! IT'S BANOFF!



WHEN CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS BANOFF FINDS HIMSELF INSIDE THE CABIN WITNESSING AN AMAZING SCENE.

GO, BANOFF, YOU ARE THE ONE WHO GAVE AWAY OUR SECRET. PRETTY CLEVER, BUT UNFORTUNATELY NOT CLEVER ENOUGH. DOG! STAND UP WHEN I TALK TO YOU!

OWH, MY HEAD... MUST STOP HIM... FLARE GUNS!... IF I COULD HIT THE TRIGGER MECHANISM...



WELL, TRAITOROUS SNAKE, WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY FOR YOURSELF? SPEAK UP!... **AYYEE! STOP!!**

THIS, CAPTAIN, THAT WHILE I'M ALIVE YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH YOUR HORRIBLE SCHEME!

SHOOT HIM!



STOP HIM! STOP HIM! IF THAT HITS THE BOMB...

ALL RIGHT, BANOFF, YOU'VE HAD YOUR FLING!

DO NOT FEAR, CAPTAIN THE BOMB CAN ONLY BE SET OFF BY THE TRIGGER MECHANISM!

UNHH!



WAIT... DON'T SHOOT! DO YOU WANT THE SHIP SWARMING WITH POLICE! THE BOMB WILL ERADICATE HIM MORE COMPLETELY, HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO MAKE ANOTHER TRIGGER?

NOT OVER THIRTY MINUTES, CAPTAIN. IT IS NO GREAT LOSS, JUST A SHORT DELAY.



GOOD. WE MUST REACH THE BOAT THAT IS GOING TO PICK US UP BEFORE MORNING OR THEY WILL LEAVE. THEY'RE AT THE OTHER END OF STATEN ISLAND...NOW TIE HIM UP AND GAG HIM. I WANT NO SLIP-UPS THIS TIME.

DON'T WORRY, I'LL SEE TO THAT!

BOUND AND HELPLESS BANOFF WATCHES IN HORROR AS THE TRIGGER IS REBUILT...

I'M A BUNGLING FOOL... THAT BOMB WILL KILL THOUSANDS, WRECK THE CITY, IF I COULD ONLY DO SOMETHING...

AS THE MINUTES TICK BY AND THE JOB NEARS COMPLETION BANOFF SINKS INTO A MORASS OF DISPAIR... THEN SUDDENLY AT THE DOOR AND PORTHOLES...

THE CHIEF AND HIS MEN! THANK GOD...

ALL RIGHT, RAISE THEM, AND HIGH! DETACH THAT TRIGGER QUICK AND ONE OF YOU RELEASE BANOFF!

NO!
NO! IT CAN NOT BE!



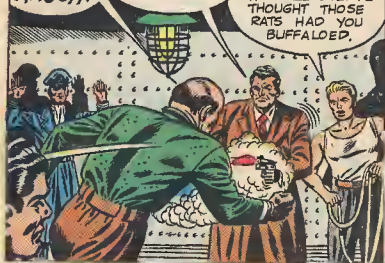
IT IS HIS FAULT! I'LL KILL...
AAGGH!

ANYONE ELSE WANT A SLUG? JUST START MOVING!

THANK GOD, YOU GOT HERE! I WAS SURE IT WAS ALL OVER. I THOUGHT THOSE RATS HAD YOU BUFFALOED.

SORRY YOU HAD TO BE SCARED THAT WAY, BANOFF, BUT I WANTED TO GET THEM WITH THE GOODS. I WANTED THEM TO BRING OUT THE REAL STUFF!

IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE AS LONG AS YOU GOT HERE.



TAKE 'EM AWAY, BOYS. WE'D BETTER NOT TOUCH THIS BABY TILL WE GET SOME ATOMIC EXPERTS HERE TO LOOK IT OVER. I'LL HAVE THE DOCK SEALED OFF.

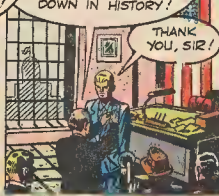
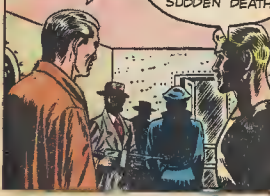
IF THAT THING HAD GONE OFF THE DAMAGE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ESTIMATED. THE PUBLIC MUST NEVER KNOW HOW CLOSE THEY CAME TO SUDDEN DEATH!

SOME WEEKS LATER IN WASHINGTON...

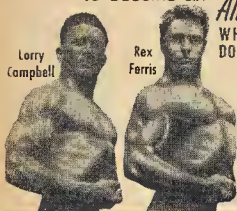
ANDRIKO BANOFF, WE PRESENT YOU WITH THIS MEDAL AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM FROM A GRATEFUL COUNTRY. YOUR DEED WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY!

THANK YOU, SIR!

THUS ENDED AN EVIL ATTEMPT THAT MIGHT HAVE WRECKED EVERY PORT IN THE U.S. IN THE SWIFT RAIDS THAT FOLLOWED TWELVE MORE BOMBS WERE UNCOVERED AND THE HORRIBLE THREAT OF ATOMIC DESTRUCTION WAS ENDED BY THE ALERTNESS AND RESOURCEFULNESS OF AGENT NK4, ANDRIKO BANOFF....



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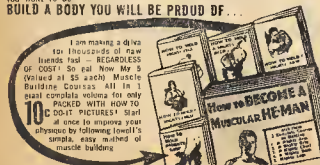
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